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2006-2007 Piscataquis County Cooperative Extension Annual Report

Donna Coffin

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Piscataquis County 2006/2007 Annual Report

Our mission: to help Maine people improve their lives through an educational process that uses research-based knowledge focused on issues and needs.



County Staff Members

Donna Coffin - Educator
Jane Conroy - Educator
Roger Merchant - Educator
Anita Libby-Kain - Nutrition Aide
Linda Whitten - 4H Aide
Teresa Allen - Secretary
Barbara Baker - Educator
Susan Henner - Nutrition Aide

County Executive Committee Members

Sylvia Black - Milo, ME
Felix Blinn - Brownville, ME
Cindy Brown - Dover-Foxcroft, ME
Theresa Boettner - Sangerville, ME
Joe Dionne - Abbot, ME
Wally Sinclair - Brownville, ME
Gale & Peter Robinson - Dover-Foxcroft, ME
Nancy & Paul Matulis - Dover-Foxcroft, ME
Shirley Hager, UMCE Program Administrator -
Orono, ME

Strengthening Small Business via Tourism

By Roger Merchant

Over 2006 Extension brought organization and leadership, information and education to the Piscataquis County Tourism Task Force. Extension engaged 255 people from small business and tourism networks with presentations and community building activities. Collaborative partners included: Piscataquis County Economic Development Council, PCEDC-Cultural Heritage Committee, Penquis Leadership Institute, Appalachian Mountain Club, Maine Highlands Corporation, and the Governors Maine Nature Tourism Initiative.

Impacts through UMCE collaborative partnership include: 1.) Publication of 2000 outdoor recreation maps of the county, 2.) Creation of two County Village Tour itineraries by the Penquis Leadership Institute, 3.) The development of the first ever, Maine Highlands Nature Tourism Guide, a regional tourism information and education product.

Extension's Piscataquis County program also engaged 330 professionals from the national land grant system with UMCE educational resources on rural entrepreneurship and tourism development.

Home Horticulture and Sustainable Agriculture

By Donna Coffin

Master Gardeners assisted in surveying Piscataquis Valley Fairgoers about their gardening practices. This is a survey that is being used at a number of large gardening events throughout the state this year.

One question has been included at the request of the Maine Pesticide Control Board

asking the opinion about charging a 15 cent fee on pesticide containers. The fee would be used for the collection and disposal of obsolete/unwanted pesticides and pesticide risk reduction education for residents, communities and schools. So far 80% of 416 respondents indicated that they favor this small fee.

The next Master Gardener training for Piscataquis County will be in the spring of 2007 and will focus on ornamentals (flowers, trees, shrubs, landscaping). We have started a list of folks interested in this training. If you know of anyone who would like to become a Master Gardener, have them contact the office to get information on the training as soon as the details are finalized.

Home Horticulture National Review was conducted by a team of Extension staff from Washington, D. C. and across the nation. The Maine Home Horticulture Program Leadership Team met with the national review team in August. Piscataquis County was well represented by Louie Ritter, a Master Gardener from Brownville.

The review team thought we had done an excellent job with home horticulture programming with the limited resources that we currently have in the state of Maine. They said, "**The Home Horticulture Program Leadership Team in Maine exemplifies creativity, innovation, cooperation and effective collaboration.**"

They felt the strengths of the Maine Home Horticulture Program included:

- Strong team with very dedicated and creative county-based educators
- Outstanding specialists
- Innovative and diverse programming
- Inspiring Master Gardener projects
- Enthusiastic and appreciative Master Gardener volunteers
- Close working relationship with Pest



Management

- Good communication and sharing of ideas among team members

Animal Identification Meeting

was sponsored with the Maine Highlands Farmers focused on IDME Animal Identification in Maine...What are the Facts drew over 50 concerned livestock owners. Speakers included Seth Bradstreet, Commissioner of Agriculture; Shelley Doak, Director of Animal Industries and Judy Perry, head of the IDME program all from the Maine Department of Agriculture.

Because we expected a large number of people to attend we used the American Legion Hall on outer Park Street in Dover-Foxcroft. While it was a heated discussion at times the audience did allow our speakers to present their information. There will be many more forums for livestock owners to express their concerns and give ideas on how we can make the animal identification program work in Maine.

Feasibility of Rebaling Large Round Bales of Hay project collaborated with a UMaine researcher on the financial feasibility of rebaling the large round bales into square bales for people who have a backyard horse. In



January we held an information session at the Agriculture Trade Show with over 25 folks

present. As a result, a number of farmers have gone to Orono to watch them rebale hay with the machine at the Witter Center.

Another value added hay market being investigated is the "Mini-Bale", or half a regular square bale, that weighs about 20 pounds compared to 45 pound regular bale. The smaller size bale would be easier for small statured horse owners to handle.

Counties. Exhibiting projects offers youth the opportunity to show case the life skills that they have learned while doing their project(s).

The 4-H youth exhibits are judged using the Danish System. "What is the Danish System?" In Danish System judging, the exhibitors are not judged against each other. In 4-H, a "modified" Danish System is used which uses standards adjusted according to age and/or years of experience. In Maine 4-H, ribbons awarded by the Danish System are Blue for excellence, exceeding the standards; Red for good work which meets the expected standard; and White for work which falls below the expected. A very special purple ribbon may be awarded to any youth who shows outstanding work in their 4-H project. The Danish System is used in 4-H because it is a way to provide recognition to greater numbers of youth who may all be making significant progress in their projects.



Brenda & Amber Oldfield & Linda Whitten – Linda is presenting Amber with a card and gift for her efforts in making the 4-H exhibit hall look spectacular.

4H in Piscataquis County By Linda Whitten

What is 4-H? 4-H is the youth development education program of the University of Maine Cooperation Extension. The goal of 4-H is to help youth develop as individuals and as responsible and productive citizens in their communities. 4-H is a "Learn-by-doing" hands-on program. 4-H is the largest youth organization in the world. Any youth ages 5-19 may participate in 4-H youth development programs in Maine.

Piscataquis Valley Fair had thirty-eight 4-H youth exhibit their 4-H projects in the 4-H Exhibit Hall. A total of 259 exhibits were on display in the hall. Youth participants were from Piscataquis and Somerset



Cassie Curtis & Chelsie Oldfield in Animal Land members of Piscataquis Family 4-H Club

Animal Land at the Piscataquis Valley Fair gives 4-H youth an opportunity to show their 4-H animal projects at the fair. A special thank you goes to the 4-H youth who cared for the animals for four days. They were responsible for feeding, grooming, cleaning up the animals' pens and for talking to the public about the animals in 4-H Animal Land.

The 4-H Food Booth is the one big fundraiser for the Piscataquis County 4-H Leaders' Association. Money earned from the food booth supports many county 4-H activities such as:

- Annual 4-H Fall Fest held at the Dover

YMCA.

- Horse camp scholarships
- Post-Secondary college scholarships
- 4-H Animal Land and Exhibit Hall at the Piscataquis Valley Fair
- Annual 4-H Youth Achievement Awards Program
- Yearly 4-H Community Service Projects
- Youth Exchanges and Cultural experiences with other states and countries
- Annual Maine 4-H Teen Conference held at the University of Maine in Orono
- New England Regional 4-H Teen Conference held each August at one of the six New England college campuses
- National 4-H Congress in Atlanta, GA.
- National 4-H Conference in Washington, D.C.
- Citizenship Washington Focus trip to Washington, D.C.
- Annual Guilford Business Expo
- Annual Homecoming Parades
- Guilford River Festival Parade

For more information about the 4-H program, or if you would like to volunteer your time and talents to assist our youth with their projects, feel free to contact the Extension Office at 564-3301 or 1-800-287-1491.

Eat Well Nutrition Program

By Susan Henner and Anita Libby-Kain

The Eat Well program here in Piscataquis County reaches adults and children of limited income. Our program year begins the first of October and ends the last day of September.

Over the past year Sue and Anita have worked with thirty seven families providing home visits that focused on eating well, lowering fats, sodium and sugars in the diet. Also includes money management, food safety, food preservation and many other topics. There is also a Learn By Mail program offered here. Over twenty families took advantage of that program.

Throughout the year there are nutrition programs held in the county's elementary and middle schools. The children have shown positive increase in their knowledge in healthy food choices, food safety and learning about the new



pyramid. This is done by classroom activities that include food preparation, growing plants, composting, raising red worms and making healthy choices when deciding what to eat. There are also monthly programs offered in all of our area's Headstart centers and some daycare centers.

Our one day summer camps were held in Dover-Foxcroft, Milo, Guilford and Greenville. At these camps the children were able to prepare healthy food, make a variety of crafts and enjoy games and nature walks to explore fun ways to increase physical activity. We also collaborate with Womancare's Harmony Camps to provide hands on activities around healthy snacks. You may have met Anita and Sue at the Piscataquis Valley fair distributing healthy snacks.



Eat Well Nutrition Program Statistics

By Donna Bucher

For the time period October 1, 2005 through August 15, 2006:

- Total number of Piscataquis County families 37
- Total number of individuals in those families 114
- Total number of youth – 1034

As a result of participating in EFNEP:

- 35% or 869 youth from 31 groups now eat a variety of foods,
- 39% of 955 youth from 34 groups increased their knowledge of essentials of human nutrition, 36% of 893 youth from 32 groups increased their ability to select low-cost, nutritious foods, and
- 35% of 788 youth from 26 groups improved practices in food preparation and safety.

Food, Family and Money Matters

By Jane Conroy

Money Sense is a successful newsletter with articles addressing needs of families on topics of spending and consumer issues. The statewide readership is reaching over 300. In a recent evaluation, 75% indicated the information was important and timely, 58% reported spending less and saving more as a result of the newsletter and 80% of the readers share the newsletter with others.

Keeping Healthy Records is a session to help individuals and families become better record keepers and advocates for their personal health care. Participants have reported using the forms to document and save time and money. These sessions were offered in Piscataquis, Somerset, Aroostook and Knox-Lincoln counties. Over 54 people have attended.

Healthy Beaches is a project in partnership with Piscataquis Public Health Council. It involved an educational exhibit at area public beaches, namely- Greenville Public Beach, Dover-Foxcroft Public Beach and Peakes-Kenney State Park. It was also on exhibit at the Piscataquis Valley Fair. It focused on topics of healthy beach behaviors- hydration and increasing fruits and vegetables consumption as snacks; the use of safe sun



Greenville lifeguard assists in applying sunscreen to participant of Healthy Beaches.

items such as sunscreen to prevent sun damage; and the reduction of tobacco use in public places.

There were over 200 individuals- young and old- from retirees to young parents who stopped by the display. Of those completing evaluations cards (107), 35% reported bringing a healthy snack, only 23% reported using sunscreen protection and 20% reported encouraging a smoker to quit. This project, funded by PPHC-a Healthy Maine partner, offered healthy snack samples to beach goers! Look for Healthy Beaches next summer!

Caring For Kids in its 14th year has been offered in Dover-Foxcroft. The 2-day program covers topics of child development, discipline, and creative play with children, safety and first aid as well as job responsibilities of the babysitter.

Home Canning and Food Safety calls, e-mails and information requests are increasing. From food handling, quantity cooking, basic "how to can" and e-coli- the topics are varied. Over 78 calls were received during the food preservation season alone.



2006/2007 Piscataquis Budget

State Support		2005/2006
Local Salaries and Benefits		\$331,615
Computer Equipment and Networking		\$8,384
Publications		\$3,974
Postage		\$4,338
Telephone		\$2,680
Travel		\$19,961
Total		\$371,952
County Support		2005/2006
Local Salaries		\$22,636
Telephone		\$2,400
Equipment		\$3,050
AV's Photography		\$60
Dues		\$100
Postage		\$200
Office Supplies		\$2,400
Books, Periodicals		\$500
Total		\$30,322

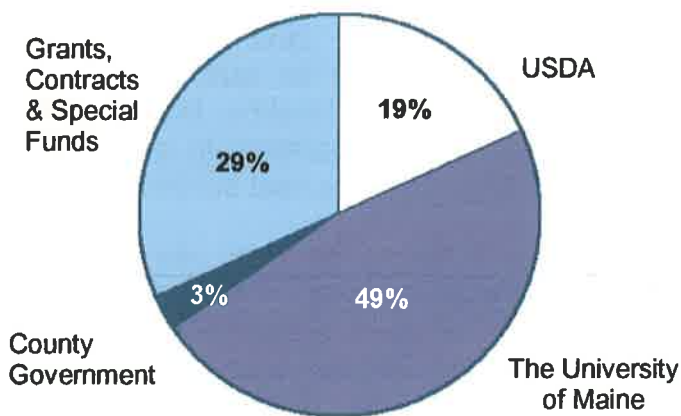


The County Extension Act

The County Extension Act explains the role of county government in funding local Extension offices:

Cooperative extension work shall consist of the giving of practical demonstrations in agriculture and natural resources, youth development, and home economics and community life and imparting information on those subjects through field demonstrations, publications and otherwise. For the purpose of carrying out this chapter, there may be created in each county or combination of two counties within the State an organization known as a "county extension association," and its services available to all residents of a county. The county extension is viewed as a unique and important educational program of county government. The executive committee of each county extension association shall prepare an annual budget as requested, showing in detail its estimate of the amount of money to be expended under this chapter within the county of counties for the fiscal year. The executive committee shall submit to the board of county commissioners on a date requested by the county commissioners, and the county commissioners may, if they deem it justifiable, adopt an appropriate budget for the county extension program and levy a tax therefor. The amount thus raised by direct taxation within any county or combination of counties for the purposes of this chapter shall be used for the salaries of clerks, provision of office space, supplies, equipment, postage, telephone, a contribution toward the salaries of county educators and such other expenses as necessary to maintain an effective county extension program.¹

¹Excerpted from Title 7, Chapter 7 of the Maine Revised Statutes, §191-§195.



University of Maine Cooperative Extension's successful educational programs result from a three-way federal, state and county partnership. UMCE uses funding from Maine counties and the University to match and leverage support from the United States Department of Agriculture, other federal grantors, state agencies and private agencies.

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